

Information Bulletin

Grade 9 Social Studies 1995-96

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This bulletin contains general information about the Provincial Student Assessment program and information specific to the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. **This bulletin replaces all previous bulletins.**

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General Information

The Provincial Student Assessment Program provides teachers, parents, students, school administrators, Alberta Education, and the public with information about what students know and can do in relation to provincial standards. Group results are reported at school, district, and provincial levels to improve learning opportunities for students.

The assessments are administered in two subject areas at Grade 3—language arts and mathematics—and in four subject areas at grades 6 and 9—language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The assessments are based on provincial standards, which reflect important learnings in the subject areas listed above. Classroom teachers from across the province are extensively involved in developing and field testing the assessment instruments.

Administering the Assessment

Information about the nature of the provincial assessments as well as their administration to special needs students can be found in the *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*, which is mailed to all superintendents and principals each fall.

Schedule

The written-response component of English and French Language Arts will be administered during the last week of May. The multiple-choice component of all achievement tests will be administered during the last two weeks of June. Specific information regarding scheduling is provided in the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

To minimize any risks to security, we recommend that all students complete the test on the same day. Superintendents approve a

local schedule for achievement test administration within the dates provided. Students who are absent when the tests are administered and who return to school by the end of the school year must write the tests upon their return. By scheduling the tests early in the administration period, most, if not all, absentees can be tested upon their return to school. The principal is responsible for ensuring the security of the tests.

The tests that will be administered each year are:

Grade 3

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

Grade 6

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Français 6^e Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

Science (English and French forms)

Social Studies (English and French forms)

Grade 9

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Français 9^e Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

Science (English and French forms)

Social Studies (English and French forms)

Students in French Immersion Programs

All students in French Immersion programs must write the French form of the achievement tests. Alberta Education will send a checklist to schools by January requesting an indication of how many English or French tests are required. These forms must be returned through jurisdiction offices by mid-February.

Marking Achievement Tests Locally

Teachers will be able to mark the tests before returning them to Alberta Education.

Teachers can use the results as part of an individual student's year-end assessment, as well as for planning instruction.

Reporting the Results

Each school jurisdiction will receive a district report and individual school reports regarding their students' achievement, as well as guidelines for interpreting these results in relation to provincial standards.

To facilitate reflection on school programs, we expect that results will be shared with all school staff (not just teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9), as well as with parents and the community.

An individual profile for each student will be sent to the school that the student will attend in September. We also expect that these reports will be shared with parents.

Provincial results for each subject and grade will be made public in September, in documents titled *Assessment Highlights*.

Broadened Assessment Initiatives

The Student Evaluation Branch has developed additional instruments to collect a broader base of information about what students know and can do than achievement tests themselves can provide. These instruments will be administered to a provincial sample of students in all subjects on a rotating basis. The following assessments will be given in 1996:

Grade 3

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

Grade 6

- "whole book" performance-based assessment in language arts

Grade 9

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

Description of the Social Studies Assessment Standards

The provincial standards are the basis upon which we assess how well students have learned social studies by the end of Grade 9. These standards reflect the essential learnings that all Alberta students are expected to achieve. Provincial standards are useful, therefore, for assessing Grade 9 students in all types of school programs—public, private, and home education.

Purpose of Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 9 students who are meeting the *acceptable standard* or the *standard of excellence* on independent work at the end of Grade 9. The statements represent the standards against which student achievement will be measured. By comparing actual results with provincial standards, decisions can be made about whether achievement is, in fact, "good enough."

Acceptable Standard

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* in Grade 9 Social Studies are expected to have a basic understanding of the concepts, generalizations, and skills fundamental to the program.

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* are expected to know how the United States and the former Soviet Union became industrialized and what impact technological change has had on Canada. Students are also expected to know how these countries have organized themselves economically. They understand how economic growth within different economic systems (market, centrally planned, mixed) affects quality of life. They understand these concepts and are able to give examples of each.

These students are expected to independently understand, organize, analyze, synthesize, and apply social studies related ideas and concepts in simple and familiar situations. They should be able to apply their knowledge of basic concepts such as industrialization, technology, market economy, centrally planned economy, mixed economy, and quality of life. Students who meet the *acceptable standard* are able to differentiate between main and related ideas in written and oral form, identify points of view expressed in cartoons, and interpret maps to uncover relationships between geography and industrialization. Students who meet the *acceptable standard* should be able to use higher-level thinking skills in familiar contexts. For example, they should be able to compare information from two or more sources, detect bias, determine values underlying a position, and make generalizations by stating relationships among economic growth, economic organization, and quality of life.

The expectation is that these students will be successful with familiar tasks and be able to compare and contrast the ways in which different economic systems respond to economic problems, analyze and synthesize information to make inferences, and draw conclusions about economic growth.

Standard of Excellence

Students who meet the *standard of excellence* in Grade 9 Social Studies have internalized most, if not all, of the concepts and generalizations fundamental to social studies. They are confident learners who demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of how economic growth within market, centrally planned, and mixed economies affects quality of life. They are able to transfer their knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar situations.

Students achieving the *standard of excellence* are able to deal with complex details and ideas. They are able to organize and interpret a wide variety of information and abstract material to some degree. They should be able to apply

higher-level thinking skills to unfamiliar contexts.

Grade 9 Social Studies Assessment

General Description

The assessment consists of 55 multiple-choice questions.* The student is required to use a separate answer sheet.

The assessment is designed to be completed in 75 minutes. However, additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish.

Content

The test is based on three social studies topics.

Topic A

Economic Growth: U.S.A.

Topic B

Economic Growth: A Case Study of the Former U.S.S.R.

Topic C:

Canada: Responding to Change

The topics are integrated within the 55 questions. For example, questions on *Topic A, Economic Growth: U.S.A.* do not constitute the first section. They are combined with concepts related to topics B and C, and appear throughout the test. (See concept headings in Sample Questions section.)

The knowledge and skills components are integrated in the test. Neither participation skills nor attitude objectives are directly evaluated on this test. However, they contribute to students' ability to do the test.

The blueprint on page 4 shows the weighting and distribution for the questions.

*All Grade 9 achievement tests will consist of 55 questions.

Blueprint

		Economic Change		Economic Systems			Quality of Life Available in Different Economic Systems	The Former U.S.S.R		Proportion of Score
		Industrialization	Technology	Market Economy	Mixed Economy	Centrally Planned Economy	Quality of Life	Geography	Economic Change	
Knowledge	Understands Generalizations, Concepts, Related Concepts, Terms, and Facts	9		9			2	2		22 (40%)
	Locating, Interpreting, Organizing	12		12			6	3		33 (60%)
Skills	Analyzing, Synthesizing, Evaluating									
	Proportion of Score	21 (38%)		21 (38%)			8 (15%)	5 (9%)		55 (100%)

Confirming Standards

Confirming standards is a process whereby judgements about students' performance on the assessment are made in relation to provincial standards. For more information on confirming standards procedures, refer to Appendix A of the *Achievement Testing Program Provincial Report, June 1993 Administration*. For information on the selection of teachers for participation in the confirming standards process, refer to the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

Sample Questions

Examples of multiple-choice questions are presented on the following pages. The examples illustrate the nature and complexity of the questions that will appear on the test. These questions have appeared on previous achievement tests and may be

used with students. Other items from previous tests remain secured (see *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program* for details). Background information for each question is provided. The *Key and Descriptors for Sample Questions* are on page 14. Each question is classified according to the topic on which it is based. In addition, the curriculum and assessment standards for each question are included.

Please note that these questions include examples of knowledge and skill questions for each of the three topics. The weightings assigned on the actual test are indicated in the blueprint above.

We encourage teachers to familiarize students with the types of questions that will appear on the achievement test by discussing these sample questions with them.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY

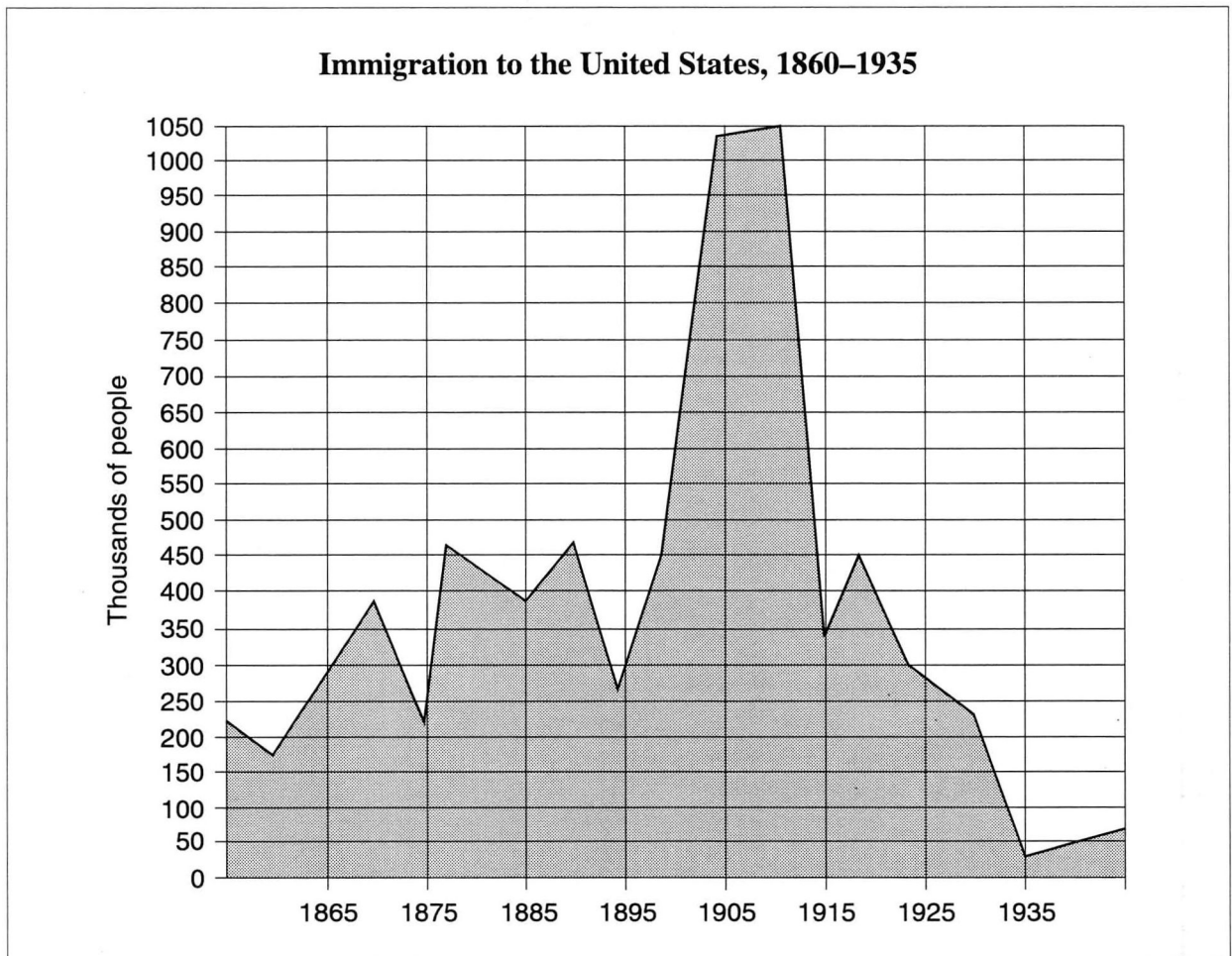
1. During the rise of industrialization, the **major** problem associated with the rapid growth of cities was the
 - A. shortage of consumer goods
 - B. inadequate education system
 - C. inefficient, unsafe transportation systems
 - D. unsanitary, overcrowded living conditions

2. A secondary industry can be described as an industry that
 - A. distributes goods and provides services
 - B. gathers and processes information
 - C. collects natural resources and produces raw materials
 - D. transforms raw materials into finished or semifinished goods

3. Which is the **best** definition of technology?
 - A. The use of computers and lasers
 - B. The use of tools to manage products
 - C. The process by which scientific knowledge is applied
 - D. The process that relates only to the production of tools

Use the following sources to answer questions 4 and 5.

Source I



—from *People, Technology and Change*

Source II

Labour Force in the United States, 1905–1955

Year	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)
1905	30 918 000	1 381 000	4.35
1915	36 223 000	3 337 000	8.50
1925	43 716 000	1 453 000	3.20
1935	42 260 000	10 610 000	20.10
1945	52 820 000	1 040 000	1.90
1955	62 170 000	2 852 000	4.40

—from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*

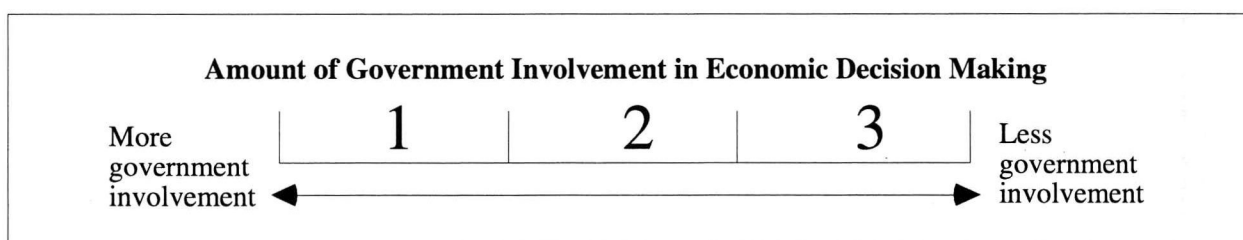
4. The information in the sources supports the conclusion that
- A. immigration rose during periods of high unemployment
 - B. immigration declined during periods of high unemployment
 - C. small numbers of immigrants were needed to provide skilled labour
 - D. large numbers of immigrants were needed to fill jobs created by industry
5. According to Source II, the unemployment rate was highest in
- A. 1915
 - B. 1935
 - C. 1945
 - D. 1955
-
6. Why is the availability of labour often a **minor** consideration in locating an industry?
- A. New industries usually hire only skilled labour.
 - B. People will usually have to be retrained for jobs.
 - C. People will usually move to areas of new industry.
 - D. New industries usually pay low wages to workers.

MARKET, CENTRALLY PLANNED, AND MIXED ECONOMIES

7. How would the government of a market economy handle a recession?

- A. Purchase key businesses
- B. Set prices that business must accept
- C. Let the economy recover on its own
- D. Enter into a financial partnership with business

Use the following chart to answer question 8.



8. The number 2 represents a

- A. mixed economy
- B. market economy
- C. traditional economy
- D. centrally planned economy

9. In the former Soviet Union, decisions about the production of consumer goods were made by

- A. individual consumers
- B. labour unions
- C. state planners
- D. factory managers

10. A person who supports a centrally planned economic system would **most** value

- A. materialism
- B. competition
- C. cooperation
- D. individuality

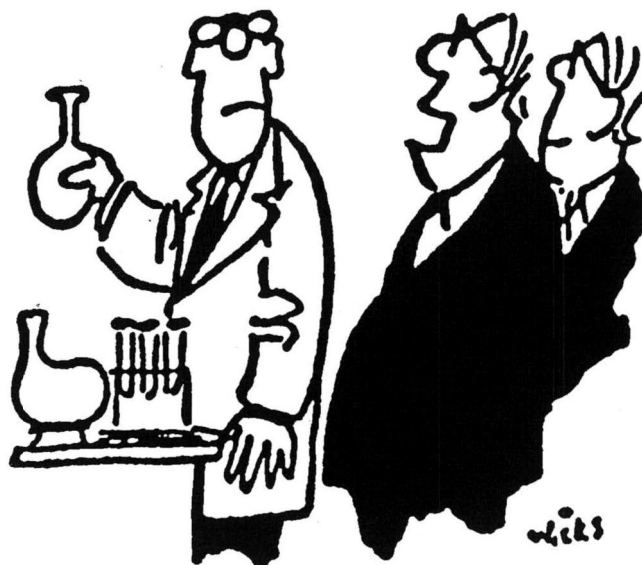
11. Which statement about economic systems is correct?
- A. People have limited wants and try to satisfy them with unlimited resources.
 - B. People have unlimited wants and try to satisfy them with limited resources.
 - C. In a centrally planned economy, distribution of goods is based on income.
 - D. In a market economy, distribution of goods is based on need.
12. In a mixed economy, government can **best** encourage technological change by
- A. increasing imports
 - B. implementing new laws
 - C. retraining the work force
 - D. funding research and development

Use the following statement to answer question 13.

The elimination of price controls could cause many citizens to fear that they would not be able to maintain their current standard of living if salaries did not keep pace with increasing prices.

13. The market condition described in this statement is
- A. inflation
 - B. deflation
 - C. recession
 - D. depression

Use the following cartoon to answer question 14.



What we want is something new. If it does anything, so much the better.

14. What is the **main** point of the cartoon?

- A. Government regulations often limit the choice of products in the marketplace.
- B. Businesses often develop products for profit rather than for consumer use.
- C. Consumers are used as a testing ground for many new products.
- D. Consumers benefit most from research and development.

QUALITY OF LIFE

15. As industrialization increased throughout Canada in the early part of this century, a major change was that more Canadians
- A. became dependent on foreign investment
 - B. moved from employment in primary to tertiary industry
 - C. became dependent on development of natural resources
 - D. moved from farms to cities in search of employment
16. Which statement accurately describes how the former Soviet Union provided for the physical well-being of Soviet citizens?
- A. Individuals assumed responsibility for their own welfare.
 - B. The state provided the opportunity for individual initiative.
 - C. The state guaranteed universal medical care and education.
 - D. Individuals were encouraged to practise their religious faith.
17. In a market-oriented economy, workers are affected **most negatively** when
- A. labour unions are organized
 - B. the demand for products decreases
 - C. the economy is in a boom cycle
 - D. labour regulations are legislated
18. An example that illustrates an emphasis on economic security rather than economic freedom is the
- A. provision of universal health care
 - B. cancellation of minimum wage laws
 - C. availability of consumer goods
 - D. creation of new business
19. To a supporter of the former Soviet economic system, quality of life was **most** related to the idea of preserving
- A. choice
 - B. equality
 - C. incentive
 - D. competition

Use the following opinions to answer questions 20 and 21.

A Comparison Made in 1985 Between American and Soviet Societies

Opinion I

I feel that there are different ways of comparing the United States and the Soviet Union. The most frequent comparison used in the West shows that average wages in the United States are much higher than in the Soviet Union, and that there are more TV sets, tape recorders, and recreational vehicles. The sweeping conclusion that American citizens are better off than Soviet citizens is based on these facts.

Opinion II

I suggest that facts could be selected to the obvious credit of the Soviet Union: the steady growth in real income; the stability of retail prices; full employment, free education, and health services for all; taxes and rents that are a fraction of those in America; cheap and convenient public transport; and so on.

20. The opinions about American and Soviet society focus on
- A. salaries
 - B. materialism
 - C. standard of living
 - D. opportunities for employment
21. The opinions **best** support the generalization that
- A. materialism is an important part of quality of life
 - B. quality of life is difficult to compare between nations
 - C. propaganda is always present when comparing societies
 - D. wages are the most accurate way of comparing standards of living
-
22. One of the **major** effects that the introduction of mass production had on quality of life was that
- A. lower prices made consumer goods more available
 - B. the quality of consumer goods increased dramatically
 - C. working hours were dramatically increased for many workers
 - D. unemployment fell as more workers were needed for production

ECONOMIC CHANGE

23. Why did the former Soviet Union sell few goods in the global marketplace?
- A. Soviet production was geared to farm goods and domestic consumption.
 - B. Soviet-made goods were unavailable in other countries.
 - C. Soviet production was geared to capital goods and military defence.
 - D. Soviet-made goods were subject to high tariffs in other countries.
24. Economic changes introduced since 1985 in the former Soviet Union have resulted in the
- A. limiting of market economic reforms
 - B. strengthening of central planning agencies
 - C. introduction of western ideas and influences
 - D. prevention of new technologies from entering the country

Key and Descriptors for Sample Questions

Ques.	Key	Topic	Component	Category*	Curriculum Standard	Assessment Standard**
1	D	A	Knowledge	C	Understand problems created by rapid urbanization	A
2	D	C	Knowledge	F	Know definition of a secondary industry	A
3	C	C	Knowledge	C	Understand the meaning of technology	A
4	B	A	Skills	A	Synthesize information to draw a conclusion	A
5	B	A	Skills	L	Interpret information from a chart	A
6	C	A	Knowledge	C	Understand factors required for industrialization	A
7	C	A	Knowledge	C	Understand role of government in a market economy	E
8	A	C	Skills	L	Interpret information from a chart	A
9	C	B	Knowledge	C	Understand role of government in a centrally planned economy	A
10	C	B	Knowledge	C	Understand beliefs/values in a centrally planned economy	A
11	B	C	Knowledge	G	Understand the economic concept of scarcity	A
12	D	C	Knowledge	C	Understand the role of government in a mixed economy	A
13	A	A	Skills	L	Interpret information to identify the main idea	A
14	B	A	Skills	L	Interpret a cartoon to identify point of view	E
15	D	C	Knowledge	C	Understand the effect of technological change on quality of life	A
16	C	B	Knowledge	C	Understand the influence of public ownership on quality of life	A
17	B	A	Knowledge	C	Understand the influence of the business cycle on the quality of life	A
18	A	C	Knowledge	C	Understand the influence of the public sector on quality of life in mixed economy	A
19	B	B	Knowledge	C	Understand the influence of collectivism on quality of life	A
20	C	B	Skills	L	Interpret information to identify main idea	A
21	B	B	Skills	A	Synthesize information to make a generalization	E
22	A	A	Knowledge	C	Understand the economic effects of industrialization on quality of life	A
23	C	B	Knowledge	C	Understand the economy of the former Soviet Union	A
24	C	B	Knowledge	C	Understand the effects of economic change in the former Soviet Union	A

*Category: F—Facts
 C—Concepts
 G—Generalizations
 L—Locating, Interpreting, Organizing
 A—Analyzing, Synthesizing, Evaluating

**Assessment Standard: A—Students meeting the acceptable standard should be able to correctly answer questions such as these.
 E—In addition to answering the questions identified for the acceptable standard, students meeting the standard of excellence should be able to correctly answer questions such as these.

Preparing Students for the Assessment

I strongly advocate preparing children to understand tests and testing through extensive class discussion about the makeup of the test and how to take it, and then adequate practice to find out their own particular weaknesses in approaching tests.

—Graves, p. 183

We hope that teachers will share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Social Studies Achievement Test.

Have students do the sample questions included in this bulletin. Then, have students share strategies they used to answer the questions.

Suggestions for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

The following suggestions are provided to help prepare students for the Grade 9 Social Studies multiple-choice questions.

Make sure you consider all forms of information provided. Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms such as cartoons, pictures, charts, or maps. Consider all forms of information provided, and think carefully about them before you try to answer any of the questions; or read the questions first, and then consider all questions you need to answer.

When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that you think is best. Some of the questions are designed to test your ability to make a judgement. These questions will always include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All of the alternatives (A, B, C, and D) are, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be “best” in that it takes more of the information into account or can be supported most strongly by reference to the information.

When answering questions, *choose the answer you think is best.* If a correct or best answer does not become obvious to you fairly quickly, you want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use your judgement to select an answer from those that remain.

Credits

- Questions 4–5 I. From *People, Technology and Change* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited).
Reprinted by permission of McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited.
II. From U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*.

Question 14 Ben Wicks. Reprinted by permission of Ben Wicks.

Donald H. Graves, *Build a Literate Classroom* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1991), p. 183.

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